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Letter dated 27 February 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a letter from the Honourable Dr. Sama Banya, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone dated 24 February 2001, concerning a unilateral action taken by the Government of Liberia within the Roberts Flight Information Region (RFIR) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sylvester E. **Rowe**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 27 February 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am constrained to bring the following matter to your attention.

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are the three Member Nations of the Roberts Flight Information Region (RFIR).

On 26 January 2001, on the receipt of a report from its Secretary-General that four telecommunications operators (two each from Sierra Leone and Guinea) had been expelled from Liberia by the Liberian Airport Authorities. We sent a note verbale to the Foreign Ministry of Liberia (see enclosure).

While awaiting a response from the Liberian Foreign Ministry, its Ministry of Transport has unilaterally declared that it is taking over control of the operations over its airspace, meaning, of course, that Guinea and Sierra Leone shall have no further connection with the organization.

Considering the current volatile situation within the Mano River Union and considering the recent Expert Panel's report on Liberia's involvement in the illegal trade of Sierra Leone diamonds and other related matters, and considering all the assurances given by the Foreign Minister of Liberia to the United Nations and to ECOWAS, my Government regards the above action as unfriendly and hardly likely to restore confidence in the activities of the Liberia Government.

My Government requests that this letter be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sama **Banya**
Minister of Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation

Enclosure

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia and has the honour to inform the latter as follows:

The Government of Sierra Leone has been informed by a report from the Secretary-General of the Roberts Flight Information Region, Elhadj Abou Bakarr Bah, that four telecommunication operators (two each from Sierra Leone and Guinea) have been expelled from Liberia by the Liberian Airport Authorities on 13 January 2001 without any reference to the Protocols of the FIR.

In this regard, the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone wishes to draw the attention of the Liberian Authorities to Article XX, which states, inter alia, "Any dispute of the Robert FIR which cannot be resolved by the Council of Ministers shall be referred to the Head of States for solution".

As the FIR is an international organization governed by accepted obligations, by all the parties, the Government of Sierra Leone strongly hopes that the expulsion of the two Sierra Leoneans would be revoked to avoid further redress on this matter.

Apparently, the Honourable Minister of Transport and Director of Civil Aviation in Liberia are not aware of the expulsion. Consequently, it is advisable that the Honourable Ministers of Transport of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone meet to review the matter.

In anticipation of the cooperation of the Government of Liberia for the continued success of the tripartite organization, the Roberts FIR, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Liberia the assurances of its highest consideration.